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Records 6-3

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To: [redacted] Deputy Chief, Administrative Services Division  
From: [redacted] Records Control Unit

Subj: Vital Documents Repository -- Outline of

**INTRODUCTION:**

At your request, I have conferred with [redacted] regarding the current status of the Vital Documents Repository. In addition to studying the basic documents in his files, we visited the interim repository to survey the present arrangement of the files.

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The interim space was occupied on 2 August 1950 as a temporary expedient until construction of a final repository was completed. There are about 25 IBM eight-drawer safe-files, 25 standard four-drawer safe-files, and the equivalent of two-drawers on microfilms representing a total of 113 (16 mm) 100 ft. reels of microfilm and 32 (35 mm) 100 ft. reels of microfilms. This count however, does not include films done by sensitive offices and other intelligence agencies. This represents vital document contributions from all offices and Staffs in the Agency. It is kept current by integrating new material periodically into the file.

II Control of the material is administered as follows:

- a) Placed in a master safe in the repository are code sheets which (a) identify the source of the material and its location in the files; (b) list the combinations of all safes; and (c) index, by key word, the subject content of the files.
- b) Official access to the files is limited to [redacted] and his Alternate, [redacted] Office representatives contact Mr. Becker directly on all matters relating to the repository.
- c) Certain sensitive units (OPC, OSO, SSS, and SRC) are authorized to have an Office Representative accompany material to the repository; however, in each case either [redacted] or [redacted] must escort them.
- d) An official chronology is maintained which records important events concerning vital documents operations.
- e) The Inspection and Security Staff is kept fully advised on all matters connected with the activity.

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The control and organization of material at the interim repository is in excellent shape. Sound plans have also been made to add improvements and refinements to the system at the final repository. Everything I saw, pointed directly to excellent administration and careful supervision of the repository by [redacted]

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**PROBLEM:**

Due to poor atmospheric conditions at the interim location, the move to the final repository should take place as soon as possible.

Moisture absorption by the records, especially the IBM Cards and the microfilm presents a serious problem. Bottom drawers in cabinets contain water, steel parts have begun to rust, and a dehumidifier was installed. Unfortunately, it is not operating efficiently and another solution will have to be found. Original documents have not yet been affected due to a precautionary step taken last September which limits filing to the upper 3 drawers of each cabinet.

The quality of microfilms deposited by the Records Management Branch in the interim repository appears good, although only a fraction was inspected. It, therefore, would be advisable to recheck all microfilms at the repository to ascertain their condition. More recent microfilms being held by the Records Management Branch are not all of good quality. Of 304 reels (16 mm), 20% are good, 30% are fair, and 50% poor, of 46 reels (35 mm), all are good. To date (27 Dec 50) 800 reels have been taken of which 145 are at the interim vital records repository, 350 reels are at Records Management Branch, and 305 reels in Library, OCD. Of the above, all except the 305 in Library, OCD are vital records.

The cause of the poor microfilm copies are the result of:

- a. Camera mechanical failures.
- b. Untrained, disinterested operators.
- c. Delay in returning developed film by Reproduction Branch, thereby preventing efficient rechecking.
- d. Processing faults; scratches, waterspots, etc.
- e. No positive qualitative controls; residual hypo, reproduction standards.

**SOLUTION:**

1. That the move to the final repository should take place as soon as possible and that it have atmospheric controls.
2. The return of all Burroughs equipment; 3 cameras purchased, 1 rented and be replaced with Recordak Commercial Microfilmers. It is recommended that the Recordak equipment be rented, as the cost is \$36 per month per unit (camera and reader), provides service, exchange when better equipment becomes obtainable, etc.
3. Obtaining 3 persons to be trained for operation of the cameras and related tasks.
4. Provide Reproduction Branch with adequate processing equipment and personnel to handle the job expected of them efficiently and expeditiously.

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5. Standards established by the National Bureau of Standards for microfilm be maintained.
  - a. Residual hypo on the film to be less than 0.005 milligrams per square inch.
  - b. Negative images to be of such quality to permit paper enlargements at no more than 10% loss in definition.
6. That the repository include equipment for on-the-spot service as soon as a disaster strikes. It is suggested that an immediate study be made to determine what equipment would be necessary to start operations.
7. Coordination of all microfilm equipment within the Agency to determine:
  - a. Amount and kind of equipment on hand.
  - b. Productivity of the equipment.
  - c. Coordinated planning of the most efficient use of equipment available.

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**VITAL DOCUMENTS REPOSITORY PROCEDURE**

- I. Status. (See attached report)
- II. Transfer of Administrative and Operational Responsibility.
  1. Clearance with Security Staff.
  2. Issuance of "H" Badges to New OC/RVD and Alternate OC/RVD.
  3. Inventory of Equipment and Documents.
  4. Transfer of RVD Administrative Records.
  5. Turn in "H" Badges of Old OC/RVD and Alternate OC/RVD.
  6. Formal transfer of RVD by memo from Chief, Services to AD/CD.
- III. Permanent Repository.
  1. Arrangement of Floor Plan.
  2. Preparation of Transport Plan.
    - (a) Marking of Equipment.
    - (b) Securing of Equipment.
    - (c) Procurement of Additional Equipment needed or not now in Interim Repository; e.g. Maps Division, Map Cases, Microfilm Readers, etc.
  3. Arrangements with Services for:
    - (a) Movers.
    - (b) Transportation.
    - (c) Per diem and Travel Allowances.
    - (d) Microfilm Plan.
  4. Arrangements with Security for:
    - (a) Armed Guards.
    - (b) Inspection of Safe-Guards Enroute and in Permanent Area.
  5. Notification of OPC, OSO, OSS, etc. of Plans and Arrangements.
  6. Execution of the Move to Permanent Repository.
    - (a) Overseeing the Move.
    - (b) Security.
    - (c) Loading and Unloading.
    - (d) Arrangement in Permanent Repository.

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7. Inspection of Area with Security Representatives.
8. Secure Area.
9. Report to Proper Authorities on Completion of Move.

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